CALIFORNIA'S PIONEER MOUNTAINEER OF RABBIT CREEK

By Albert Dressler

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California's pioneer mountaineer of Rabbit Creek

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CALIFORNIA'S PIONEER MOUNTAINEER OF RABBIT CREEK

California's Pioneer Mountaineer of Rabbit Creek

JOHN THOMAS MASON'S meanderings in the out of the way places of the Western wilds. A short sketch of his ancestry, starting with the famous French explorer, La Salle, who was in the Great Lakes territory of America in 1669. Mason crossed the plains in 1851, and, to the present, has spent 79 years in the Rabbit Creek region and Sierra County. Together with facts—curious, furious, funny or fine—of this rough and rich country in early days which have been little heard of or else forgotten.

Albert Dressler
1930
San Francisco

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Who, during many years, has been active in the preservation of material relating to the history, early and late, of California.
He appreciated, encouraged and aided me, and in grateful acknowledgment thereof, this book is dedicated to him in friendship.

The Author.

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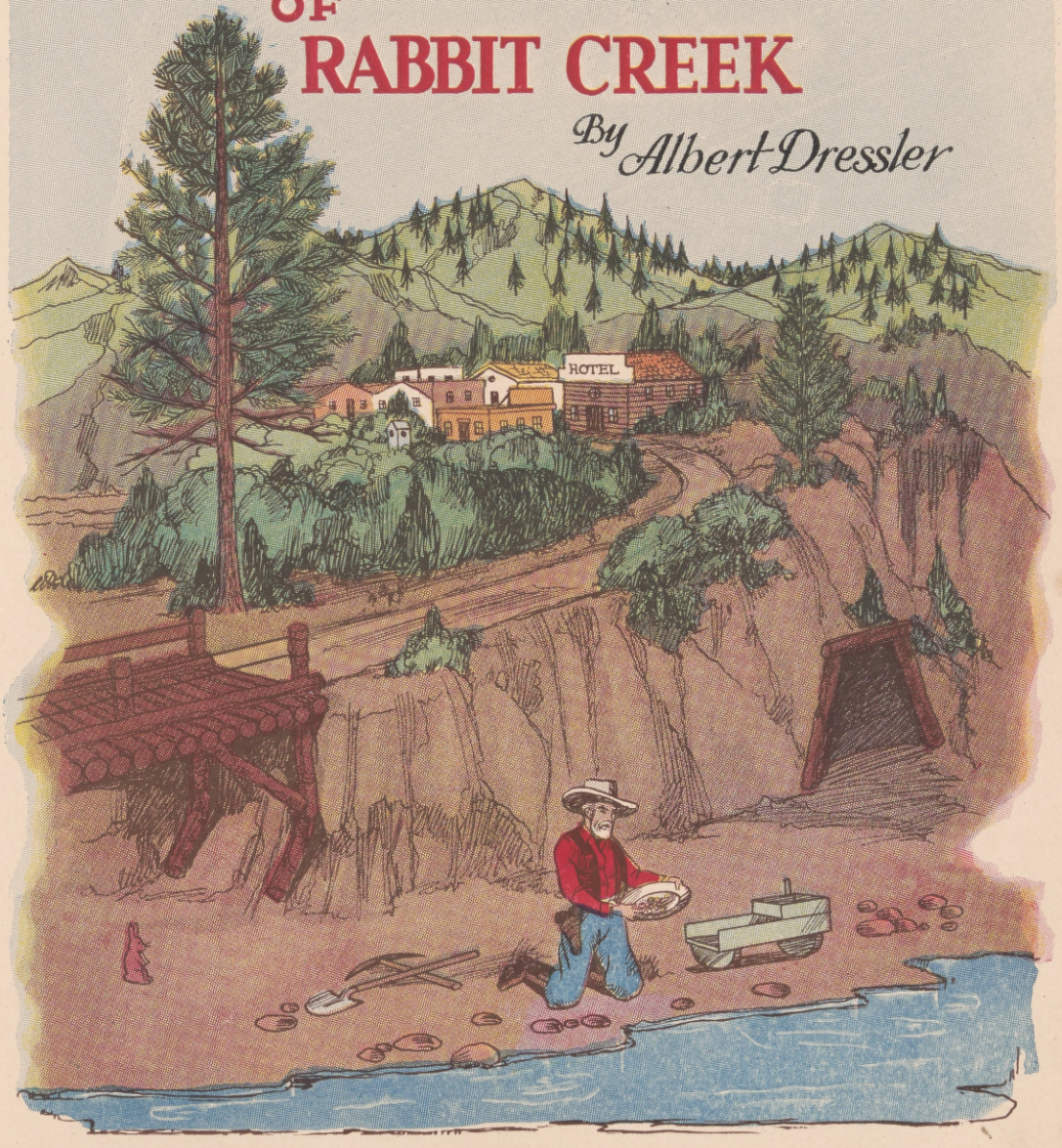
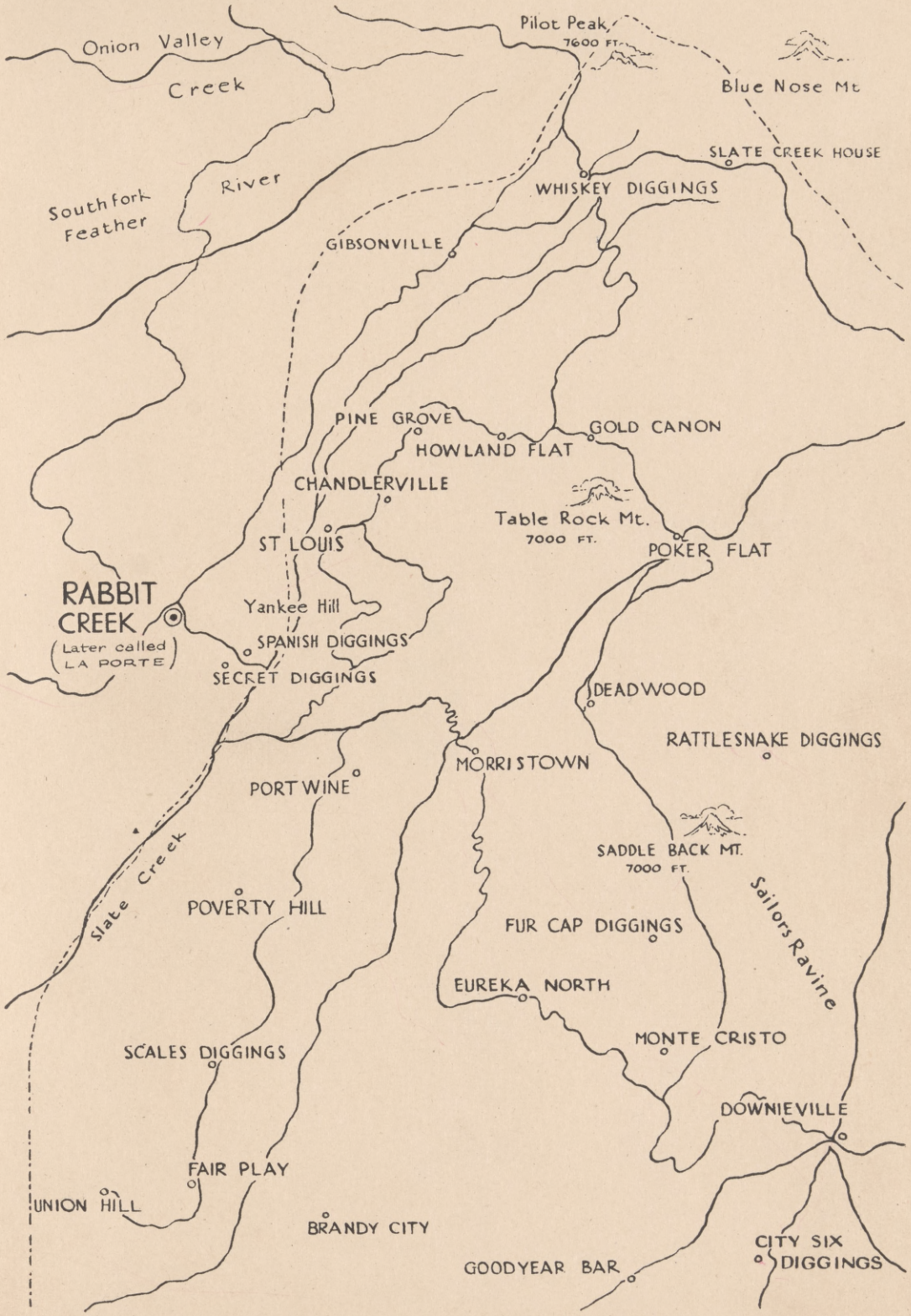
CALIFORNIA'S PIONEER MOUNTAINEER OF RABBIT CREEK

By Albert Dressler





MAP OF RABBIT CREEK REGION AND PORTION OF SIERRA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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California's Pioneer Mountaineer of Rabbit Creek

JOHN THOMAS MASON

JOHN THOMAS MASON was born June 18, 1847, at Alton, Madison County, Illinois. His mother's father was John La Salle, a descendant of the famous French explorer, Robert Cavelier, commonly called the Sieur de la Salle. It may be interesting to note that this early La Salle was born in 1643, came to America to the Great Lakes region in 1669, attempted to colonize Louisiana in 1682, and was murdered by his enemies May 16, 1687, at the age of forty-four years, after having spent twenty years of incessant activity in discovery and exploration.

John La Salle was one of the Hudson Bay trappers who came to California in 1831 by way of the northern route. La Salle was with James Beckwourth when they discovered in 1846 the pass which now is known as Beckwourth Pass, located in Plumas County, California. They trapped extensively in the northern section of California through what is now known as Lassen, Modoc and Plumas Counties, where furs were then very plentiful.

La Salle visited General Sutter at Fort Sutter in 1848 and became familiar with the prospects of the future El Dorado (Gold). He returned to the States in 1849 with the intention of fitting up a hundred emigrant schooners and escorting them to California, together with the family of Henry Harrison Mason, who had two small sons, John and William.

The work of preparing this large train took more than a year and its center of operation was in Missouri. Here the schooners were built and loaded with the supplies which La Salle well knew would be indispensible. Each schooner was to be drawn by oxen. Men without funds desiring to come West

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were to drive for their board and transportation to get to the Gold Country. During the period of preparation about a hundred other schooners were assembled by different parties and combined with La Salle's, making an exceptionally strong train.

They left St. Joseph, Missouri, April 5, 1851, and followed the main blazed trail. La Salle, prophesying the possible high waters, fitted up two schooners as boats for ferrying swollen streams. These were used on the Platte River. The other schooners were taken apart and ferried across on these two specially built boat schooners.

It was crossing the Platte that a shot was heard, and on looking up the river white smoke was seen coming from the bushes. La Salle was summoned and he went alone to the spot. On returning he carried with him a gun and tomahawk, but he did not say a word to his party as to what had happened.

Near Cheyenne, La Salle noticed a scouting band of Cheyenne Indians in their war paint. He ordered that the schooners be pulled up in a circle with the cattle in the center. The Indians, riding bareback on their ponies, darted out in all directions with spears, lances, bows and arrows, and a few guns, but did not attack on account of La Salle's large company. The emigrants stayed there over night. The next morning three miles from camp they found a family of five—man, wife and three children, lying dead, and a burnt schooner still smoldering. After burying the bodies in a way that made it impossible for the coyotes to dig them up, they continued without any hindrance until the Rocky Mountains were reached. Many hardships were encountered; the roads were rough, steep and dangerous, and at a point near the summit one of the schooners toppled over the road bank, which was very narrow, dragging a party of four and the two oxen with it, killing both oxen and injuring the people.

Salt Lake City, Utah, was reached next, and the Mormons were there in all their glory. The city was doing a big business as a supply and stopping port. Two days and nights were spent here, loading and resting up, and unloading a few folks that decided to become Mormons. Then Westward Ho, again, over the deserts, hills and mountains, where very little

pleasure was afforded until the hamlet of Carson City grew on the horizon.

It was lively there, and fresh fruit and vegetables for which the surrounding country was responsible, were welcome. Washoe Lake afforded fish, while game birds, deer and bear hunting was good. All these things seemed to have been placed there by Divine Providence to create new vigor in the people for the last lap of the trip, over the Sierras.

When the company reached the spot where Reno, Nevada, stands today, the parties that had joined La Salle in order to have him pilot them decided to leave him and go on, some by way of Emigrant Gap and the others by Henness Pass, while La Salle and his party continued on by way of Beckwourth Pass through to Johnsville, Plumas County, California. They had to cut the first road through where Gibsonville now is to Rabbit Creek, Sierra County, California, arriving there at noon, November 5, 1851.

General John A. Sutter had established a Supply Post at Rabbit Creek, and the agent in charge informed Mr. Henry Mason on the day of his arrival that a few men had gone to Spanish Diggings about a mile and a half from there; also that a small number of men were at Secret Diggings near Spanish Diggings; that big finds had been made, and prospects were very good in both places. So Father Mason, the same day, continued on and chose Spanish Diggings as the final stopping place.

A schooner, food, and materials, such as whip saw, cross cut saw, nails, hammers, et cetera, were left by La Salle for the Mason family.

The rest of LaSalle's company continued on, but soon scattered in all directions, in the foothills and valleys, so that by the time Marysville and Sacramento were reached La Salle had sold practically everything, making a large fortune due to his knowing so well what was needed most in California. La Salle returned to his home in Kentucky soon afterwards.

The Mason family, on arriving at Spanish Diggings, were welcomed by the entire populace of nine men; they were Col. R. H. Rose, Pop Mendelhall, Jacob Gregg, Ben Colt, Col. Cellars,

John Horn, William Horn, John Irish, and James O'Brien.

The following day Father Mason, with a good equipment of tools which he had brought along, started, with the help of several of the campers, to erect the first house. As winter was fast setting in, they worked vigorously and soon had it finished. The other men, who were all living in tents, hurried to get housed in the same fashion, but the snow fell too fast, and the best they could do was to make a shedding over their tents. When the weather permitted, panning and digging for gold was very profitable.

A WOMAN HUNG

A great deal of talk and discussion, approving and disapproving was still going on since the arrival of the Mason family, regarding the hanging of Juanita, a Spanish woman, at Downieville, Sierra County, July 5, 1851. However, some of the best facts available are as follows:

Downieville's Boss Gambler Cannan, who had a big gang of followers, went with a number of his set and entered Juanita's house and created a disturbance and riot there on Friday night, July 4, 1851.

The next day at noon Cannan, it is said, called on her to apologize for his unmanly behavior; but whether that was his intention no one could prove, as he went there alone. Nevertheless Juanita was so outraged over the previous night's occurrence that she stabbed him to death at the entrance to her premises.

Juanita was quickly arrested and taken to Major William Downey's cabin for trial and sentenced to be hung the same afternoon at 4 o'clock. There assembled five or six hundred people to witness the execution. She did not exhibit the least fear, walking up a small ladder to the scaffold and placing with her own hands the rope around her neck, first gracefully removing two plaits of raven black hair from her shoulders to make room for the fatal cord. On being asked if she had any thing to say, Juanita replied: "Nothing, but I would do the

same again if I were so provoked.''—and that she wished her remains to be decently taken care of.

RABBIT CREEK REGION COVERED WITH FIFTEEN FEET OF SNOW DURING WINTER OF 1851-1852

Snow in abundance quickly fell in the latter part of November, 1851, and by Christmas almost every cabin in the Rabbit Creek section was out of sight.

The Mason family had the only dwelling at Spanish Diggings. It comprised four rooms (or compartments)—a kitchen, store place, bedroom, and the other section was used for whatnot. There was a stone fireplace within, and furs, guns and mining tools were scattered about. In one corner could nearly always be found a dog, the only dog in Rabbit Creek region. Another corner contained a barrel of sauerkraut, while still another corner had its corner on whisky in a barrel, but this was a new addition. It belonged to a neighbor, John Irish, whose tent had collapsed under the weight of snow upon it; so he and the whisky moved in to reside with the Masons. It took two days of tunneling through the snow from Irish's tent to Mason's (a distance of about fifty feet) to transfer the barrel of whisky, as it could not be rolled over the top of the soft snow.

After Christmas the windows had to be boarded up, as the snow was falling faster than it could be shoveled away. The result was that their dwelling place was in darkness, and the candle supply being exhausted, the only source of light was the fireplace.

After the first of January, 1852, food became very scarce, and anyone who cared to dispose of their grub was very well paid. Mother Mason's sauerkraut did not last long under the steady demand. By that time there were fifteen feet of snow covering the ground, and all were beginning to suffer for want of food, as no supplies had arrived for over two weeks from

Marysville, which was about 68 miles distant, or Downieville, twenty miles away.

The Mason family did not taste any meat for over two months, and were substituting roots for vegetables in soup. On March 17th Mr. Irish was pretty well liquored up and exclaimed before the family that the dog would make one good meal at least. Johnnie and Willie both cried over the remark. The snow was now melting, and Father Mason went out with his gun, bagging a rabbit after toiling about half a day on snowshoes. He wanted to surprise the family, so did not inform them of his treasure, except Mother, who prepared the dainty dish—rabbit stew—for supper. When the folks noticed the food, it surely brought a gleam to their eyes; but suddenly Johnnie jumped up, with a leg of rabbit dangling from his little hand, and hollered: "Is this my dog?" Just then the dog groaned a little

and turned over for another snooze.

When Spring ushered out the snow, food followed in to the houndish physiqued populace.

RABBIT CREEK REGION STARTS TO BOOM

Early in the Spring of 1852 men began to flock into the Rabbit Creek region, having heard of the richness of the diggings. In order to somewhat protect themselves, the miners held a meeting on April 25th, 1852, to fix the limits on mining claims, and also to elect an Alcalde (Mayor) which they had as much use for then as a man has for three legs. Col. R. H. Rose was appointed the Alcalde.

COPY OF THE MINUTES, MEETING HELD AT SPANISH FLAT*, APRIL 25, 1852

At a meeting of the miners of Spanish Flat held at the house of James C. Sellers, April 25, 1852, at 3 p. m., R. H. Rose was chosen Chairman and Jacob Gregg, Secretary.

of Rabbit Creek

The following resolutions were adopted by the company holding the race water leading into the Spanish Diggings, and to be adopted by all the members of these diggings.

1. That a Recorder be elected for the purpose of recording miner's claims of ground, their extent, locality, bounds, etc., and giving such claimant a certificate for the same. And that said Recorder's fees shall be fifty cents for each certificate given.
2. That all persons who have taken up claims in these diggings be required to come before the Recorder and give a chart or correct statement in regard to the locality of their claims within five days from this date.
3. That an Alcalde be elected for Spanish Diggings.
4. That after an election being held, R. H. Rose is duly elected Alcalde and Jacob Gregg, Recorder.
5. That a committee of three men from this place together with three from Rabbit Creek be appointed to visit upon Dr. McKinsey on the 26th instant, for the purpose of having a correct understanding in regard to his intentions of taking water through a race from Rabbit Creek.
6. That a copy of these resolutions be set up at some conspicuous bulletin in this place.

*Author's note: Spanish Diggings is referred to in above miners' article as Spanish Flat.

SPANISH DIGGINGS CHANNELS

SPANISH DIGGINGS comprised three distinct Channels—the Blue Lead, the Red and the Grey. The Blue Lead was the lowest and the richest, although the other two Leads were very rich. The diggings was about 6,000 feet long and 3,000 feet wide from East to West, to where the bedrock rose up 200 feet nearly perpendicular, and from that point leveled off again, making another channel 1,200 feet wide and a mile long. Then again the bedrock went up nearly perpendicular 300 feet to the top of the ridge called Warren Hill. This channel also was rich the entire length.

GOLD MINING IN THE RABBIT CREEK REGION, CALIFORNIA

These channels concentrated together at a point between two ravines at the lower end of the diggings, running into the main ravine leading into Slate Creek. At the point of junction it was only about 600 feet wide and was very rich.

Father Mason and the few men there in 1852 panned and rocked as high as $300.00 per day, to the man, at the grass roots. The concentration of the four channels at this point undoubtedly was the cause.

From this point on to the North the ground became deeper, until at its deepest point in the Blue Lead it was 175 feet in depth, and 50 feet in depth on the East on the Grey channel.

There were three distinct characters of gold in the three channels, and all three were found at the point where they concentrated. It was a mystery to the men working there why the gold came that way, not knowing anything about gold; but as the other chanels were worked separately, the mystery was solved.

GROWTH OF RABBIT CREEK AND VICINITY WARRANTS CONSTABLE

THE first substantial house built at Rabbit Creek was erected in the Fall of 1852 by Eli S. Lester, and was called the Rabbit Creek House (Hotel). Within the hotel a Trading Post was established, which had provisions and miners' supplies. Two barns were also built for housing livestock and hay.

During the following Spring, a number of houses and stores were built, and like magic, whisky and men in large quantities began to pour into Rabbit Creek region. It became necessary, in July, 1853, for the people to elect a constable. James O'Brien was unanimously elected, having no opposition, he being the type willing to eat out of anyone's hand. Drinks from all his supporters drenched the dry constable after he accepted his nomination.

Whisky was the most popular drink, and this particular Rabbit Creek brand made the drinker, a moment after, jump

around like a rabbit. The morning after the election and celebration James O'Brien entered on his duties as constable by weaving his way to the most comfortable chair in front of a saloon and made himself ready for business.

O'Brien was shortly afterward asked to also act as constable for Spanish Diggings, as it was nearby. He readily accepted and he was then termed High Constable and Collector of all the surrounding country. There was a trail about one and a half miles long up a steep grade on Warren Hill, leading to Rabbit Creek from Spanish Diggings. O'Brien resided at the latter place, but his office was in Rabbit Creek, so he moved to that place, astutely vouchsafing that should business call him to Spanish Diggings he would not have to go up hill; going down the grade was all right, however.

The people of Rabbit Creek thought that a jail was necessary as well as a peace officer, so both troubles would be linked together. So the miners assembled one Sunday, that being the proper day for such business transactions, with the assistance of the forty rod lightning whisky that was dealt over the bars, and ordered a jail to be built by the officer, O'Brien being supposed to fully understand the workings of such a structure. He started in the next day with the help of four men to hew the logs, and soon had the massive, formidable looking bastile complete. It looked like a big log bear trap, but had a partition of logs running through the center with a place cut for a door,

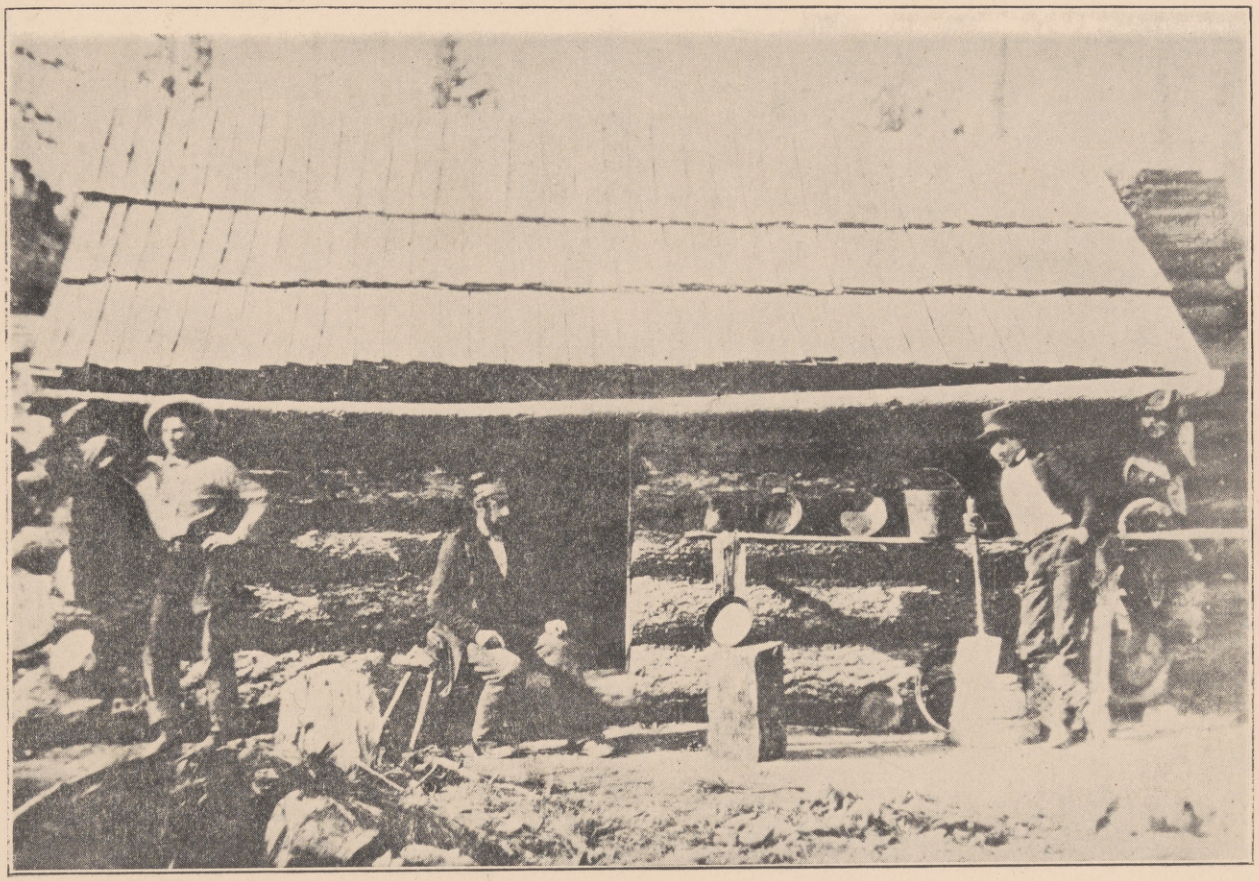
Constable, James O'Brien

although no door was in sight. The massive outside door made of strips nailed together with handforged big headed nails looked wicked from the outside; also the long bar of iron which ran across to a staple for the padlock. Some of the wise ones, on viewing it, said that the padlock was put on the outside so that in case of fire any common piece of iron would pull it out and the prisoners would not be burned. The day it was finished all but the floor, the Constable received by pack train (the only means of transportation then for passengers or mail) a circular giving a description of a man who had stolen a horse in Marysville.

O'Brien started out to look for this man and had not gone far before he noticed a stranger who seemed to answer the description of the man wanted. He walked up to the man and said, "You are a horse theif. Come along with me to the bastile." The stranger followed without any resistance and was locked up.

As this was their first prisoner the people were greatly excited, and it was thought desirable to have a jubilee. They drank in many places and congratulated the constable on his keen eye and good judgment. At 11 o'clock that night the prisoner walked into the saloon where they were gathered and informed the officer that he was dry. Upon being asked how he got out of the jail the prisoner told them he dug out under the logs with the aid of a pick, shovel and crowbar which he found there. "I remember leaving them there," said the official, "but you had no business using them." The prisoner was given a drink and then taken back to the jail; the hole he had dug was filled in and the tools were removed. In the morning when the constable went to the jail he found the prisoner had escaped. He was never recaptured.

The jail was soon afterwards sold for use as a cellar to store goods in, to Levi Westonhaver, who owned a large store and warehouse at Warren Hill.



MINER'S LOG CABIN NEAR RABBIT CREEK, CALIFORNIA

of Rabbit Creek

LARGEST NUGGET FOUND AT DOWNIEVILLE

The largest nugget of gold ever found in the United States, and the third largest in the world, was discovered by G. G. Finney* in 1853, near Downieville. It weighed 5,009 ounces, valued at $84,302, and contained only three per cent of foreign matter (quartz). It had the form of a pair of dumb-bells and in getting it out with his pick Finney broke the link connecting the two bells.

It was taken to San Francisco and a steel strap was riveted to the link. A hole was bored through the nugget and a small chain passed through and secured it to the counter in the office of a prominent mercantile firm there. It was visited by thousands before being shipped east, being a curiosity even in those days of abundant gold dust and nuggets. It was the year (1853) of California's highest gold tide, for the State produced $83,000,000 that year—mostly from placer diggings.

Rabbit Creek, Spanish Diggings and Warren Hill grew rapidly, likewise the career of the constable, and by July 1, 1854, three thousand men could be assembled at Rabbit Creek in one hour's time if necessary. In the saloons, gambling and drinking were in full blast night and day. Faro, Monte, Rondo, Chuck-a-Luck, Blue-Jay, Keno, were the principal games played. No chips were used, but coin and gold nuggets were piled on the table to play against. Generally the Faro banks opened with from $6,000 to $10,000, and sometimes there was as high as $20,000 on the table in the Monte banks. At Spanish Diggings

*Mr. Finney came from the State of Virginia and was known through all the northern mines of California as "Old Virginny." It is an interesting fact that he who discovered the largest nuggets should have given Virginia City its name, in which existed the greatest gold and silver lode (the Comstock) ever developed. It is a coincidence that from an old and intimate friend of Finney (Comstock) the celebrated lode took its name.

RABBIT CREEK CALIFORNIA, IN 1854

a large community hall three stories high was built by the people. On the first floor were two large rooms forty by twenty feet, and one on the second floor in which to hold dances for the general public. The rooms on the first floor had a row of heavy square timbers running the whole length throughout the center, but the upper hall was clear of any obstacles. All dancing was done on the upper floor except when there were more dancers than the upper floor could accommodate, then both floors were used. This happened on many occasions. John Kirk was the leader in all dances, as he was given the credit of being the best dancer. He superintended both floors and everyone obeyed his commands. The third floor was used as a lodge room, and there it was that the Vigilance Committee often met.

Rabbit Creek began to be overrun with the robber and cut-throat element in 1854. The people were panic stricken and buffaloed by their bold robberies and murders. Among the most notorious "bad men" of this period was Whiteheaded Ross, who was a colorful figure of Sierra County in the early fifties.

Ross was a native of Tennessee, migrating to California in 1853. He settled at Spanish Diggings, where he built a cabin on the main street. Later he bought a mine elsewhere, which he worked intermittently, but he always returned to Spanish Diggings.

In the Spring of 1854, he returned from his "diggings" with eight companions, all equipped with very fine horses—and the Highwayman Business began with Ross as the leader. Ross and his men neither drank nor gambled. All were sharp shooters with either hand, and they roamed the country, robbing, pillaging and murdering much at will. They were bold in their holdups, and Ross boasted many times about how he got his start for California. While walking down the street one day in his home town, a storekeeper almost dragged Ross into his shop and insisted on selling him a suit of clothes. Ross protested, but the merchant was determined, it seems; and then the thought struck Ross to let him fit him out completely for the journey to California, and then rob and kill him. This he did, as was later declared true in a sworn affidavit by Julius McClellan, before the Vigilance Committee in 1854. McClellan

had come from the same place and recognized Ross.

Each Sunday Ross would ride along the road and select a suitable spot for target practice. He would mark six small trees on each side of the road, and each man had to ride through these at top speed, with a gun in each hand, and fire at the targets marked by Ross. If a man missed one, which was seldom, he had to go through and repeat the performance until he had done it to Ross' satisfaction. This demonstration was given to throw terror into the hearts of the residents, and it was effective, to say the least.

Ross was also known as an expert knife thrower. He always carried two Bowie knives, twelve inches long, one on each hip. He would bet with anyone that he could hit the heart in the ace of hearts across the longest bar room in town, at $20 a throw, a feat he often accomplished, bets or no bets. He could kill a man at fifty feet or less, and had done so more than once.

One day a bar keeper was sitting in a chair by the stove in his bar room when a stranger came tearing in. He wore an old gray flannel shirt and had a six-shooter strapped to his belt. He inquired of the bar keeper where all the bad men of the town were, and said he was looking for them. The bar keeper told him there were plenty of them in town, but none in sight just then. The stranger saw a man named Ben Colt sitting by the stove and said, "Have a drink with us." Colt excused himself, saying he did not drink, which was really true, and thanking him for the invitation; whereupon Colt was jerked out of his chair and forced to the bar, where he drank at the point of a pistol, and was then slammed down into his chair again.

It was not the custom for bar keepers to interfere with the desires and movements of their patrons—this having proved the safest method—so the bar keeper kept his counsel. He noted, however, with some interest, that Ross had been watching the incident from his cabin across the street. A beckon was enough to bring Ross over, and when he stepped inside he heard the "bad man" cursing Colt and demanding that he get up and have another drink. Ross warned him to leave Colt alone. The stranger wheeled around suddenly and whipped out his gun. At the same time Ross' knife went into his heart, and he fell dead.

Ross walked over to where he lay, pulled out his knife, wiped it on his boot, and replaced it in his scabbard, remarking to Colt, "He won't trouble you any more." No one ever knew nor heard who this "bad man" was, nor where he had come from, and the verdict of the people was that he got what he deserved.

Ross and his band would winter in the valley, and returning in the Spring with fresh horses would resume their pursuit of banditry. But as the Vigilance Committee gained in strength and power, Ross and his gang disbanded, and Ross himself was forced to leave the state for safety. He was followed to a small town in Idaho, where he was later killed by one of the bad men of Eureka North, Sierra County, California.

The constable, James O'Brien, was at the height of his glory and trusted by everyone, at the time of the first disastrous fire at Rabbit Creek, in 1855. It was at this time, however, that the following event took place.

A big store was situated on the corner where the street crossed over to what was known as Aristocracy Ridge. The constable had a very fine residence at the lower end of this ridge, where it dropped off into the main creek. The storekeeper had built a large fireproof cellar under his store, with iron doors in the back on a level with the road leading over the bridge. When the fire occurred the store building was burned, leaving the cellar intact with a quantity of valuable goods in it, such as bacon, whisky, beans, et cetera. The store was insured, and when the adjuster came up, he turned the keys over to the constable and hired him to look out for things until the insurance was adjusted and paid. After the adjuster had gone, O'Brien got busy secretly filling his own cellar.

One night Julius McClellan had occasion to come into town from over the Ridge at about 1 o'clock in the morning. On reaching the top of the Ridge, he heard a grating sound down by the bridge that he could not understand. A fence of one of the residences ran parallel with the road a short distance down. McClellan got inside the fence, crawled down to the corner to investigate. He saw a man come slowly up the hill and pass within a few feet of himself, and was much surprised to find that it was James O'Brien rolling a barrel of whisky homeward.

THE RABBIT CREEK HOUSE

FOR SALE.—The proprietors being about to return to the Atlantic States, offers at private sale, for cash, the hotel and trading establishment known as the Rabbit Creek House, situated on the wagon road leading from Marysville to Gibsonville and the City of Seventy-Six, at the point where the trails leading from St. Louis, Chandlerville, Pine Grove, Port Wine, Craig's Flat, and Eureka intersect the main road.

The location for either a Hotel or Miners' Store is unsurpassed, situated as it is in one of the best mining districts in the State, within less than a mile from Spanish Flat and Warren Hill. In addition to the ordinary Hotel fixtures, the proprietor has on hand a large stock of goods suitable for the Mining Trade, which will be sold either with the hotel or separately.

There are on the premises two excellent Barns, one 70x20 feet and the other 60x18, with floors overhead and about five tons of good Hay; also, five thousand pounds of Barley on hand.

To a person of active business habits and well acquainted with the business of hotel keeping and trading in the mines, no better opportunity can be offered in the mountains; and to any such desirous of purchasing, the proprietors will take pleasure in exhibiting the income of the establishment for the last two years. In addition to the patronage of the traveling community, the house is well sustained by the miuers in the immediate neighborhood, who prefer to purchase their supplies there. No better location for a permanent and lucrative business can be found, where all the advantages of a wayside hotel and a miners' stor can be combined.

The proprietors are desirous of disposing of the above property for no other reason than that they are determined to leave the State. The house is in good repute and doing a better business than ever before, and the purchaser will find it in good order, well stocked and well patronized.

All persons indebted to the subscribers will please make immediate payment, and all persons having claims against the establishment will please present them, as they are ready to settle all claims whenever presented.

E. S. LESTER & CO.

Rabbit Creek, May 18, 1854. m20-3t

Fac-simile of a Newspaper Advertisement from the "Sierra Citizen," Downieville, California

McClellan said nothing and O'Brien was unaware of his presence.

In a couple of weeks, when the adjuster returned, he and the storekeeper checked up the goods and found a lot of supplies missing. They asked the constable what he knew about it, but he denied all knowledge of how such a loss could occur; said he did not watch all night and could not account for for the loss. McClellan told the storekeeper what he had seen that night, a search warrant was procured, and O'Brien's house and cellar searched. Large quantities of ham, bacon and other provisions, together with four barrels of whisky, were found. O'Brien pleaded guilty, was tried in the District Court, and sentenced to fourteen years in the penitentiary.

RABBIT CREEK'S RAPID GROWTH

THE BANK OF RABBIT CREEK was started by John Conly with a capital of about $6,000—which he made by mining in Gas Gulch on a small bar near the head waters of Lost Creek, about seven miles from Rabbit Creek. Later A. H. Crew joined with Conly as a bank partner. The firm then became known as Conly and Crew, Bankers.

Hours for banking were plenty. The bank was open daily from early in the morning until late at night, and business was also transacted on Sundays and holidays to accommodate the miners and themselves, by getting the gold dust and nuggets while the getting was good.

Adams & Co., of whom Frank D. Everett was representative, opened a banking and exchange business here in conjunction with their express and mail business.

Each of these banking companies had a large gold weighing scale about three feet tall, made of solid brass, with pans to hold the precious metal that were made the size of a pie pan. Often a lucky miner would fill one of these pans with gold, in exchange for legal tender pay.

The largest mining ditches in this vicinity were Big Ditch, Little Ditch, Yankee Hill Ditch, and Grass Flat Ditch. The first three were represented by E. S. Lester, and Dan Ritchings was

agent for the last named.

Hydraulic mining was introduced here in 1853, with fine results with one exception, which is referred to in the following statements of Dissipated Dick, who was caretaker of Byington and Taylor's Livery Stables. Johnnie Mason had just returned from looking at the operation of a new and large hydraulic mining works and stopped to leave a message with Dissipated Dick who as usual immediately asked Johnnie questions. "Where have you been?" was the first. "To see the new hidrillic works at Poker Flat." Then Dissipated Dick burst out with this weird story:

"You ought to stay clear out of sight from a hydrollic works. Them are terrible dangerous. Just last week Long Hi, a Chinaman, was working near the reeseevor of water that shoots first through a very, very wide pipe, which gits narrower as it gits to the bottom of the hill and squirts the water with an awful force. Poor Long Hi was monkeying around on the bank of a hydrollic reeseevor when he slipped and got sucked in the pipe, and away he went, goin' like lightnin' for about five hundred feet, 'till he was squeezed through the nozzle of the pipe line, making him twenty feet long when he shot out, and they had to coil him four times to git him in a coffin."

By this time Johnnie's eyes were moist, and Dissipated Dick spit for a fresh chew of tobacco and gloated over what he had told Johnnie.

A Post Office opened at Rabbit Creek, September 13, 1855. The Postal authorities gave it the name of Rabbit Town. Eli S. Lester was appointed Postmaster. The Post Office was in conjunction with J. C. Lester's News Stand, Book and Variety Shop. The addition of the Post Office made Lester's shop the busiest place in town.

The name of Rabbit Town soon disgusted the people as often outsiders questioned why it was called Rabbit Town. Was it on account of the residents living and acting like rabbits? Even a fracas occurred over the name of Rabbit Town, a miner of Brandy City welcoming a visitor from Rabbit Town by saying, "here comes a rabbit." This ended in a furious fight. There

were many other incidents which were embarrassing to the Rabbit Towners. Most every one objected and had their stationery printed using the name of Rabbit Creek, but the Post Office sign remained Rabbit Town.

The first brick building in Sierra County was erected at Rabbit Creek in the year 1856 by Fuller and Buell, and called the Alturas Block, it being completed September 6th, 1856. A gala celebration ball was given in honor of the building.

During the year of '56 banner mining claims were the most numerous, which made many rich and times here were very flush. As is the case with perfume—when one gets close to it they cannot help getting a little on themselves—so was it with the Mason family. They were now quite wealthy and well known, even if they did not reside on Aristocrat Ridge.

THE BAKER

Johnnie and Willie Mason were returning to school after lunch on a cold winter day. They stopped to look in the new bakery shop and saw many pies lined up on the tables inside. Their lunch had been scrumptious, yet the sight of the pies made their mouths water (and almost their eyes).

Johnnie said to Willie, "I got fifty cents and them pies is a dollar, and the baker won't cut them. What do you say, Willie, if we go in there when the baker goes in back of the store, and you knock one of them on the floor and I'll do the talking." The next minute the boys were at the counter and a pie was on the floor. The baker appeared and asked, "What will it be, boys?" Johnnie said, "How much for the pie on the floor?" The baker looked in amazement at the pie and finally said, "Well, you can have it for half price"—which was the exact amount of their capital—fifty cents. Smiling approvingly, they purchased the pie and beat it to school, where they carefully and most cheerfully downed the pie behind their books, pretending to be reading.

California's Pioneer Mountaineer

PROFESSOR EDWARD VANDERWORT, MIND MINER

Professor Edward Vanderwort claimed to be a spiritualist, hypnotist and antiquarian with exceedingly great occult power.

He possessed an ultra-clever apearance. His head and face were covered with long muddy looking whiskers, fishy eyes, partly hidden by poodle eyebrows, together with a faded frock coat, made him a dazing sight.

The medium obtained permission from John Mason's father and mother to give a seance in their dining-room. The following notice was posted all over the town:

"Spanish Diggings, June 2nd, 1854. I shall give a seance in the big dining-room of Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Mason, on the evening of day after tomorrow. My subject will be Spirits. Come all. E. Vanderwort."

The notice caused a diversity of comments and on the appointed night an expectant crowd assembled. Mrs. Mason was cooking for sixteen men and the dining-room table was sixteen feet long and over three feet wide, made of sugar pine. Professor Vanderwort instructed them to place the palms of their

Fac-simile of a Spirit Daguerroetype of Professor Edward Vanderwort

hands on the edge of the table, which they all did, some slipping their thumbs under the table (contrary to directions) to make sure that it would move! Some were serious about it, many of the women giggled, and general confusion ensued. The table began to move before it was told to do so. A woman burst into hysteria during the silence, which so disturbed the spirits that the table trembled violently. The Professor shouted for order ineffectively. The table refused to move at the proper time, and the guests were much concerned over the apparent consternation among the spirits, which the Professor was unable to account for. Nevertheless the table did move, and it never became necessary for the medium to give another proof of table-moving by the spirits in Rabbit Creek.

HOW SOME OF THE MINING TOWNS AND DIGGINGS DERIVED THEIR NAMES

RABBIT CREEK was named from the rabbits which were plentiful at the time of the first appearance of the prospectors. The rabbit of this region was neither a jack nor a cotton tail. It had peculiar feet, suitable for snow hiking, and was known as the snowshoe rabbit.

Spanish Diggings. On account of not understanding the locators of this diggings—two prospectors who spoke only Spanish—the newcomers called it Spanish Diggings.

Poker Flat derived its game name from a playful set of miners who spent their spare time dealing cards at Poker, and using nuggets for chips.

Port Wine. Port wine was greatly craved by one of a party of rum running miners, a tendertaster amongst them, who did not enjoy the hard brand of booze but was always whining for Old Port; so the boozers named their camp after their tenderfoot's favorite beverage.

Downieville was named for Major William Downey. Arriving there in 1849, he established things in a leading manner. He had gold claims near by at Hungry Mouth Diggings, and in

Jim Crow Canyon.

Brandy City—christened unanimously by drinking men of brandy.

Sailors' Ravine. Several sailors, deserting a ship at San Francisco in 1853, made their way up the North Yuba River to Downieville, and thence a little north, where they worked hard and were about to give up when they struck it. One nugget weighed twenty-eight pounds, almost pure gold, and worth $5,400.00, so that is why they thought it worth being called "Sailors' Ravine."

Petticoat Slide, near Poker Flat, got her name this way: The entrance to this camp was quite steep, and slippery in wet weather. The first women to venture into the camp were a few Hurdy Gurdy Girls, who came to work in the saloons, gambling dens, or to be mistresses for several miners. One of them slipped on this entrance to the camp and slid into it, much to the amusement of the miners. The hill was promptly dubbed "Petticoat Slide."

Shirt Tail Canyon. In the Spring of 1853, a prospector, coming down this thickly wooded and brushy canyon, lost his footing and pitched down over the heavy brush. When he landed he was minus his pants. As he entered camp, with but his red shirt fluttering its tail to a brisk breeze it stirred the sturdy miners, after having several drinks, to let this canyon be known as Shirt Tail Canyon.

FORTUNE MADE IN DRIED APPLES

APPLE SAUCE was served on Christmas, 1855, at the Rabbit Creek house as a rare treat. Nevertheless, a traveling salesman, not knowing its rarity, conceived an unusual desire for more apple sauce. It was refused him, as only a certain portion was allowed for each guest. The housekeeper explained that dried apples were scarce, and that apple pies sold for $1.50 each.

This aroused the salesman to thinking, and soon the word got east, and two shiploads of apples were westbound. In the meantime, the salesman went to nearly every merchant in this territory and carefully took a large order for dried apples. Each buyer thought best to keep his business to himself, and it was quite a surprise when dried apples engulfed the country in such quantities that prices were lowered and sales retarded.

Levi Westonhaver, who owned a large store and warehouse at Warren Hill—which was between Rabbit Creek and Spanish Diggings—received his large dried apple supply also; but Levi was a Columbus and discovered that they made great cider and jack. Knowing of the enormous supply of dried apples available, he decided to buy them up at a very low figure, often pretending he did not know that there was such a mess of them In a short time few merchants had any dried apples left in store. The apples were stored in Levi's warehouse and the cider and jack was in process. This soon sold fast and furiously, with the result that Levi Westonhaver made a fortune out of his speculation in dried apples.

CALIFORNIA STAGE COMPANY'S ROUTE FROM MARYSVILLE TO RABBIT CREEK IN 1856

A semi-weekly stage line, operated by the California Stage Company, was another improvement for this country, but the service at its best was never without hardships. The roads were rough and very steep in places, and passengers sought their comfort in space that was not occupied by baggage, express or mail. The Chinese were compelled to ride on the top, but often a lady occupying a seat in the covered section of the coach found herself next to a sweltering fat man or a drunkard, the rough riding made it almost impossible to avoid being squeezed at times.

Very seldom were the little windows of the coach opened in dry weather, as the dust was very thick and tobacco in those days was chewed most profusely (generally the upper deck of the coach was covered with plenty of chewers). Often a rut in the road as big as a washtub was struck, jarring out any good thoughts that one might be musing on. In winter, when the roads permitted the trip to be made, the passengers were expected to get out and push the coach up a slippery grade or through mud. After a passenger had purchased his ticket, he could not count on his life or destination—he was in the hands of the California Stage Company, who were often termed as "no good," though the driver of such a stage coach in the fifties considered himself as great a man as a Governor is today, and dangerous as a rattlesnake when it came to making things move. There he sat beside a messenger, who carried one or two cap and ball guns to protect the stage from highwaymen. The Governor (driver) was always a selected clever man of the reins. Often, when the roads were clear, he would drive his six horses, which were of the best type, with the reins held between his feet—while he would politely pick from his pocket an excellent cigar, light it, and leisurely puff away the miles of the trip.

There were many stops on the way—sometimes to water

the horses, or for lunch or a rest. The country afforded much variety of scenery. From the lowlands through the foothills was an interesting drive, but the mountains in this section afforded many thrills, and all eyes were open. There were curves so sharp that at times all one could see of the six horses were the last two horses' tails. The road was narrow, and over a thousand feet below sparkled a mountain stream. An occasional deer was glimpsed, and the growl of a bear might be heard in

the nearby brush; or the coach would come to a sudden stop at the sharp command, "Hands up!"

The trip was made in from twelve to sixteen hours, depending on road conditions; it was a distance of sixty-eight miles, and it was a great event to the weary, shaken-up travelers when they finally reached their destination. When the stage arrived in Rabbit Creek nearly everyone came running to meet it, and crowded around it like children around a Christmas tree—all curious to see what it had to offer. Sometimes it brought several Chinamen and a half dozen new miners, as well as the usual bags of mail and express, which were eagerly awaited. The newspaper editor, with his pad and pencil, pushed his way around and piped everything he could; the hotel owners were dressed in their best, anxious to accommodate the passengers; while the single men were most frequently prospecting for a wife.

At one of these mass assemblies an accident happened. A beautiful young lady was stepping out of the coach when her hoop skirt became entagled with the boots of one of the men in the coach. She had both feet on the ground—yet her hoop skirt was still in the coach. To depict this disaster would be cruel, still it is said it made many a miner smile with delight.

ROWE & CO.'S

PIONEER CIRCUS!

JOSEPH A. ROWE...JOHN SMITH.
PROPRIETORS.

THIS ELEGANT ESTABLISHMENT—ahead of all others that have ever appeared in the State, is now on its second trip through the Mines, and will perform in FOREST CITY on

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY,
August 5th and 8th.

Alterations have been effected in the general Roll of entertainments, comprising an entirely NEW ROUTINE OF SCENES AND ACTS—embodying among them:

THE DOUBLE PERCH; CRYSTAL PYRAMIDS;
FLYING BAR ON THREE HORSES;
GLOBE PERCH; TYROLEAN SWAINS;
DUPLICATE LADDERS,
WITH THE DANCING HORSE, ADONIS.

The above is a part of the New Role to which our kind patrons will be treated. And when we name the celebrated

WIZARD BUGLER,

from New York, Mr. R. WILLIS, as Leader of the Band, our cup is brim full.

ADMISSION:

DRESS CIRCLE,.....TWO DOLLARS.
PIT,.....ONE DOLLAR.

The internal arragements and accommodations which this company have for the comfort of families, are superior to all others.

☞ This Company will perform at SAN JUAN, Friday, August 1st; ORLEANS FLAT, Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 2d & 3d; CHEROKEE, Monday, Aug. 4th; DOWNIEVILLE, Wednesday and Thursday, August 6th & 7th.

[6-2t.] CHAS. C. PELL, Agent.

CIRCUS.—Rowe & Co's Circus performed here on Tuesday night to a very full house. A benefit for the relief of the Masonic Fraternity of Nevada will be given in Forest City on Friday evening. The nett proceeds of the performance will be given to this praiseworthy institution, and we hope that our citizens will fill the canvass to overflowing, "and learn the luxury of doing good." This generosity on the part of Messrs. Rowe & Co. should be met in a kindred spirit by the inhabitants of this place and vicinity. Buy a ticket, even if you can't go to the performance. This concerns all.

"In faith and hope the world will disagree,
But all mankind's concerned in charity:
All must be false, that thwart the one great end;
And all of God, that bless mankind, or man."

TELEGRAPH.—We learn from John C. James, Esq., that the line of Telegraph between Rabbit Creek and Downieville will be pushed to completion as soon as possible. The wire and insulators, &c., are already purchased, and will shortly be sent from below, to Downieville. We commend this enterprise to the public as one of great utility and necessity, and congratulate our friends in the north that the enterprise is being prosecuted by men of energy and perseverance. When completed, it will save many a hard day's travel through the snow this winter.

ROWE'S CIRCUS

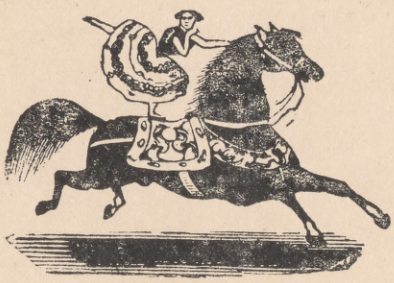
THE PIONEER CIRCUS OF CALIFORNIA, founded by Joseph A. Rowe, first played in San Francisco October 29, 1849. Rowe's Circus was billed for Downieville, California, August 6th, and more than a score of residents of Rabbit Creek region started at 4 a. m. to hike by trail to the circus.

Mr. and Mrs. Mason, with their two boys, made this trip, which was by way of Brandy City and Goodyear Bar, a distance of about fifteen to sixteen miles. The first resting place was at Brandy City, where they lunched about 9 a. m. No sooner had the party finished lunching, than a large rattlesnake was noticed and hurried them on their way. They had still to go four miles down to Goodyear Bar, through timber and brush, and another four miles up the Yuba River to Downieville, where the circus was.

Rigs, wagons, horses and people crowded the town. Two of the saloons had extra bars put on the sidewalks. The Masons lost their party, but lost no time getting seats at the circus.

Mr. Rowe started the performance with his famous horse Adonis, which was well trained in tricks. Ladies riding horses bareback thrilled them all, while the clown did the least and received the most applause. After the show the Masons looked for a place to stay over night. The only place available was in a barn with a dozen other circus cravers.

Next morning the Masons left alone on their return trip, as many decided to stay around for more fun; but it was rather hard fun for the children, who were used to a bed instead of hay. Johnnie and Willie Mason were tired and sleepy when they reached home, yet it had been a wonderful sight and pleased them a great deal.



GRAND CHRISTMAS BALL.

You are respectfully invited to attend a Grand Ball, to be given by Stahl & Brown

At Ritts' Hotel, Rabbit Creek, Dec. 25, 1856.

Managers:

J. R. Porter.....Secret Diggings
Norman Sheldon.....Pine Grove
J. B. Carrington.....Grass Valley
Frank Schoonmaker.....Gibsonville
J. F. Edmonds.....Strawberry Valley
R. Hewett.....Scales' Diggings
Wm. Francis.....Spanish Flat
Robert Gordon.....Port Wine
E. Whiting.....American House
J. J. Ott.....Mt. Pleasant Ranch
E. W. Buell.....Rabbit Creek
H. C. Brown.....Rabbit Creek

—FLOOR MANAGERS—

E. D. BALL, RALPH ELLIS, J. W. DAVIS.

THE BEST MUSIC IN THE MOUNTAINS WILL BE ENGAGED

Messenger Print, Rabbit Creek.

Fac-simile of Ball Invitation

THE GRAND CHRISTMAS BALL AT RABBIT CREEK
1856

This poem, rhyme, or what have we, was created in the
Furious Fifties

by

A Freak Genius

It was a bright Christmas night,
When all the people gathered 'round.

The Hotel was full of light
In the little Rabbit Creek town.

Everybody was happy and gay
Because Stahl and Brown gave a dance.

That's Christmas, 1856, I say,
When everybody took a chance.

J. Porter, he stood at the door,
While miners from Secret Diggings were in line.

Then all feet danced on the floor
To the tunes of the time.

Frank Schoonmaker had a big smile
Spread all over his face,

For there was his best pal,
Wm. Francis, come into the place.

Robert Gordon talked to folks from Spanish Flat,
While Port Winers had their drinks.

All men tipped off their hat,
And some scratched their heads to think.

The American House Lady was there in full bloom,
When J. J. Ott from Mt. Pleasant walked in.

There was a Christmas shining moon,
And nobody thought of sorrow or sin.

The floor manager danced outside,
Just to make more room for the crowd,

Outside were buggies they did ride,
And covered wagons looked so proud.

Brown and Buell were at the head line
They were merchants of the place.

Oh! how they did look and shine,
Almost like a diamond's face.

But just then the music played so sweet,
They all grabbed arm in arm.

They kept step with their feet
And listened to the music charm

of Rabbit Creek

This took place on Christmas night,
Way up in old Rabbit Creek.

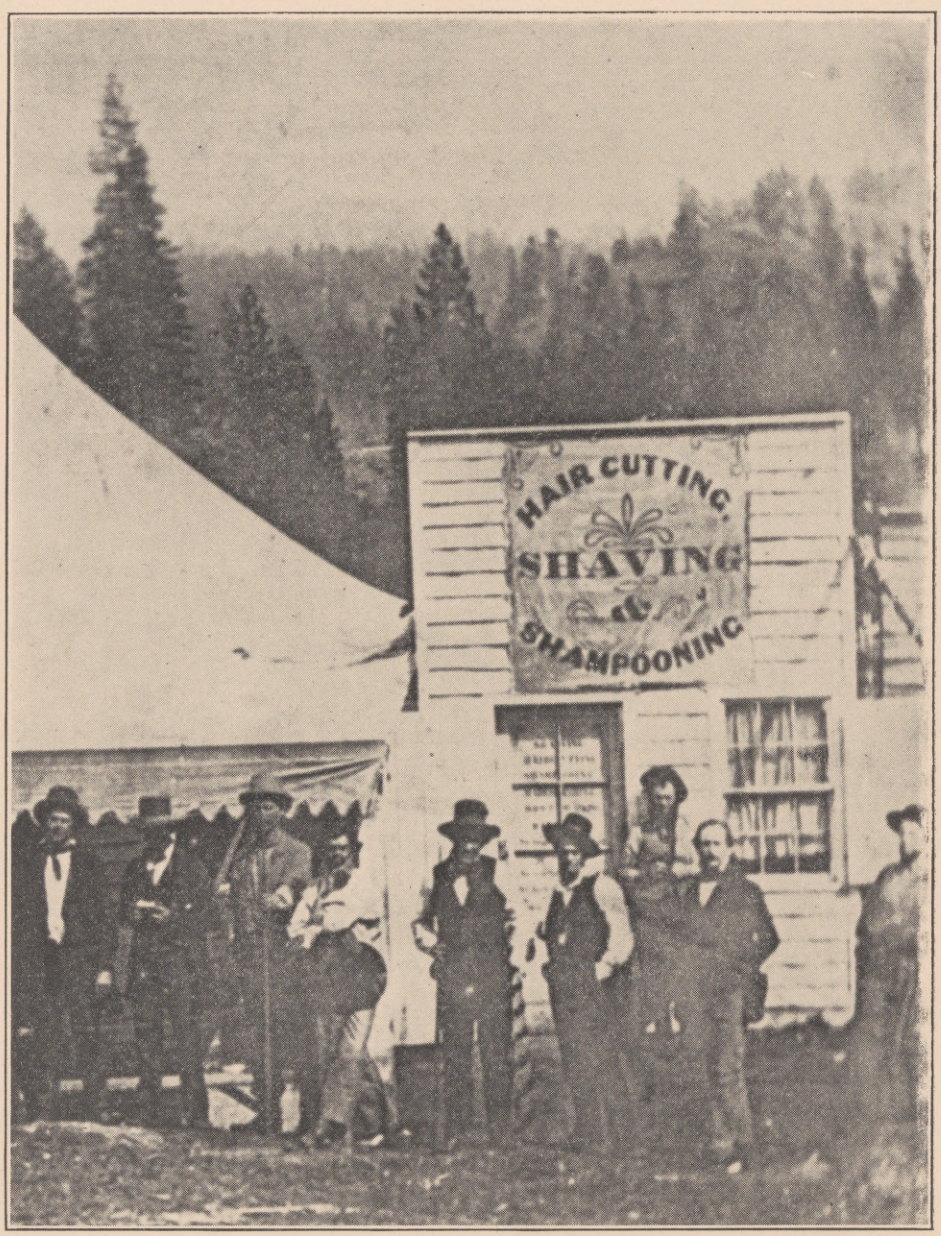
It was in 1856—that's right—
And many drank too much and got sick!

The ladies in their hoop skirts,
Keeping snake hips out of sight.

No smoothe-faced gents with soft front shirts
Were at the Kitts Hotel Ball that night.

There stood a preacher with the Masons,
Pure and true with tender love.

Johnnie and Willie, their loving sons,
Appeared good as angels from above.



FRITZ BRUHN'S TONSORIAL PARLOR OF RABBIT CREEK, CALIFORNIA

BARBERS AND BATHTUBS

FRITZ BRUHN opened the first barber shop at Rabbit Creek in the Spring of 1857, and later, by means of a partition, added a bath room. This first tub in town was a circular affair, constructed of heavy tin, and had a seat on the edge. Fritz's friend Butch Fregaski had the honor of initiating the new lay-out free, but from then on the price per bath was $1.50.

At the time Frank opened his shop, a sign painter blew into town and in three weeks had every place of business that required lettering, illuminated; likewise, himself. This knight of the brush made a heap of money, but he left as he arrived, broke; having added, however, a choice collection of bruises to his anatomy.

The most popular indoor sport in the Spring of 1857 in Rabbit Creek was bathing at Fritz's. This, together with a large business of hair-cutting, shaving, trimming and shampooing, made a pile of money for Fritz, and he was looked upon by many as the ace of business men in Rabbit Creek. It was in Fritz's barber shop that Joaquin Murietta, the notorious bandit, received a hair-cut and shave. After Fritz had performed the tonsorial requirements upon the notorious bad man, Joaquin calmly sharpened his three daggers on Fritz's hone. But Murietta did not tarry long in Rabbit Creek.

Saturdays, or the days of a ball or some social event, one would have to wait hours for his turn at the bathtub, and many could not get served in time to attend functions. Five dollars was often paid to get a good spot in the line.

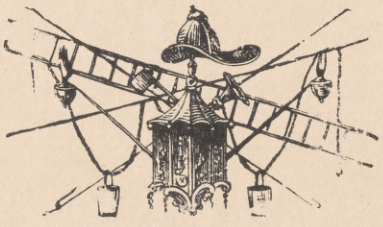
But this situation did not last long, as another barber was soon sent for from Sacramento. His name was Mike Murphy, a prince of a good fellow. But when he studied the situation in the bath room conducted by Fritz, Mike became thoroughly disgusted; the idea of from six to eight bathers using the same water, except that one bucket-full was taken out and another one of hot water added, did not appeal to his sense of cleanliness.

Shortly afterwards Mike opened a barber shop of his own. He soon had most of the elite trade and quicly gained Fritz's position as an ace of the business men, wedging Fritz to the deuce.

Yes! Mike went into the bathing business too.

He installed the very latest, like this one.

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT



The first fire fighting organization was started in 1858 after B. W. Barnes had installed a water supply of some practical use. Log pipes conveyed water down to a reservoir, which was located at an elevation of approximately sixty feet above the town of Rabbit Creek.This height did not afford much of a pressure. The reservoir was not very large, and could quickly be emptied by a steady draw.

On Thanksgiving, 1858, the business men and a number of residents formed a Volunteer Fire Department (the first organized band of fire fighters) with nearly one hundred members, adopting the usual forms. The unusual feature was the installation of several tanks ten feet in depth and six feet wide, submerged two-thirds in the ground. These were put in on Main Street—one by Cayot's Hotel, one by Dr. Drake's Drug Store, and another by Gordon's Grocery. They were filled with water from Barnes' Water Works. A dozen buckets were near each tank, and also several picks and hatchets.

This new equipment was no sooner completed than a fire broke out in Chinatown, which was but a block away from Main Street to the East. Soon the reservoïr was emptied by the hosemen, and the town tank dipper department did their stuff to empty the water in the tanks, with the result that the fire was under control but not quite drenched. The Chief of the Volunteers, fearing a second Oriental outbreaking from the smoldering shacks which would probably spread to the business district, ordered barrels of beer, and twenty were emptied to quench the fire before the Chief pronounced the conflagration out. At the next meeting of the Volunteer Fire Department, the bill for the beer was ordered to be paid from their funds.

SLICK JIM THE BAD MAN

By the Poet of Rabbit Creek

Slick Jim started for Rabbit Creek town,
When getting a little ways away—

He looked at his dirks with a frown,
And these are the words he did say:

"I am big and tough and rough,
I will show them down in Eldorado Saloon.

If they say anything I will give them enough,
When I get there at noon."

He roared loud through the pines,
As he walked down the road.

Even the birds heard his whines,
And heard him grunt without a heavy load.

California's Pioneer Mountaineer

He walked right to the saloon door
And gazed in at the bar,

Then thumped in upon the floor,
And saw the bartender smoking a cigar.

He put his hand under his shirt
To get his trusty gun.

He did not care if he did hurt,
If the bartender tried to run.

"I am from Howland Flat,"
That's the first thing he did speak.

"I think I will put a hole in that hat,
Or one in either of your feet."

"Don't be shaking like a fish fin,"
He said as he stepped to the bar.

"Just give me a glass of gin,
And the best kind of cigar."

He tipped the glass to his lips,
And drank the gin down.

"Say, don't try to give me the slip,
For I am the baddest man in town."

Then he walked outside,
Sat down on a box.

His eyes were his guide,
He was sly as a fox.

But some boys came along
And said "Let's have some fun.

While Slick Jim sings his song,
Put these firecrackers in the box and run."

Willie just nodded his head,
And Johnnie lit the fuse.

Old Slick Jim thought he was dead,
And nearly lost his shoes.

He broke in a big run
Over to the drug store,

While the boys had their fun—
You ought to heard them roar.

He headed for Doctor Drake,
Thinking he was going to die.

Flying through the door at a terrific rate,
He gave out one big yell and cry.

"Doctor, just look at me,
I am all blowed up in the air.

Am I going to die, can you see?
Tell me while I'm alive and here."

Then Doctor Drake said "There's hope"
And sized him up with a grin.

"Five dollars fees and don't mope,
All you need is another dose of gin."

Author's note: This masterpiece of mighty mental mangling could no dobut be improved upon by music, and Mr. Mason suggests Auld Lange Syne.

A COUPLE OF UNFORTUNATES

PENURY PETE and Lazy Lou were the nicknames of the best bums of Rabbit Creek. How they managed to maintain existence was a puzzle to the people, yet they had been pals for over a year here, living in a small cabin a mile above the town. They always were planning to do something big, but never had anything to do with it.

One day on their way to town they both spotted a gold nugget in the road, which the recent rains had washed into sight. They sold it in Rabbit Creek for $25.50, dividing the sum between them. This was on July 3, 1856, the day before a picnic celebration which was to be held up in the timber.

The two pals immediately started figuring on how to invest their money. Finally Penury Pete got an idea about the Fourth of July picnic, and told Lazy that they could make a lot of money if they had a barrel of beer up there. This met Lazy Lou's prompt approval and they at once invested $20 as partners in a barrel of beer, hiring a wheelbarrow from Mr. Mason who insisted that his son Johnnie go with it so he would be sure it would be returned.

They arrived there far ahead of the picnicers, and after getting the barrel set up and a table made from some timber they had picked up, they were ready for business. Johnnie stayed with them and heard their big plans, which were to divide the profits from the beer equally after selling it for fifty cents a glass. Finally their preparations were all set and they waited anxiously for the crowd to come.

Lazy Lou felt a lone fifty cent piece in his pocket. At the same time Penury Pete felt one too, and each conceived the same idea. All this time Johnnie was nearby, watching for the business to start. When Pete said, "How about each of us buying ourself a drink?" Lou agreed, and the proposition was that each had to pay cash so they would not lose anything on themselves. Then Pete drew a glass for himself and handed over to Lou his fifty cents. Likewise Lou drew one for himself and handed Pete his fifty cents. They both commented on how good

it was, and regretted that the crowd had not yet started to appear.

It wasn't long before Lou suggested to Pete, "Let's have another one, as long as we pay for it." "Yep, that's just what I was thinking about, too." So they had another drink and paid each other. Johnnie started to figure and was puzzled, but being a mere boy he took it for granted that the men knew their business; so he played around until he noticed they were buying each other drinks quite fast, and still no one else had shown up.

An hour later the picnicers came, but the barrel was empty. Lazy Lou, lying limp, asked Penury Pete, who was beside him with his back propped up against a fallen stump, how much money they had taken in, and told him to count it and divide it. Pete dug in his pockets and could only find fifty cents. He said to Lou, you must have the money, 'cause I paid you for every drink." Lou turned his pockets inside out, but to Pete's disgust he only found fifty cents.

RABBIT CREEK A MECCA FOR CHINESE

OF all the neighboring mining camps with the exception of Downieville, Rabbit Creek excelled as a Mecca for the Chinese, who by 1858 had a town of their own within its limits—in fact, their town started but one block East of the main street and grew in that direction. It was comprised mostly of merchants who had stores of many kinds familiar to their trade. There were several opium and gambling dens which were patronized frequently by the Melicaman*, who often preferred to trust the God of a Chinese gambling outfit, rather than take a chance playing in a gambling house owned by a boss of his own skin.

The Chinese miners and poor class were huddled along

*Melicaman—Chinese pronunciation for American man.

the Creek that bears the same name as this rattling and rapidly growing little City—"Rabbit Creek"—which was close enough to the town that at times one could hear their shrieks, mumblings, and smell their cooking.

Rain or shine, the Chinaman would be eagerly engaged in panning away during the day and long into the night, with much good results at this early stage of placer mining.

Seldom did these Chinese carry a gun, as they were costly and it took practice to use them. They were satisfied with their own less expensive armor, which they seemed to use as well. Daggers, spears and hatchets were their preferred means of protection, though seldom used except upon their own race. As in most places where a herd of heathens get together, they split and fight one another, and Tong Wars often result.

In Rabbit Creek the Chinese behaved quite well until a young Chinese girl of about twenty-one, by the name of Tee, was kidnapped from her newly wedded husband, who had her come from China to Marysville, California. A Chinese lady was exceedingly rare amongst the Chinamen then—probably one to fifty of the opposite sex. Two or more highbinders had squeezed her into the bottom of a wagon, with one of the highbinders keeping guard over her, and probably they were several days in bringing here safely to a Chinese Hell hole at Rabbit Creek. It was over a month before she was rescued. Frantically, at mid-day sometime in September, a wild confusion burst out as if the Volunteers' Fire bell had been sounded. Up and down went the Chinese (mostly down) until a large number of peaceable citizens cleared the rioting and dragged several injured Chinese down and away from the entrance to a two-story wooden building, where Tee had been kept under the roof. She was taken back by her rescuers the following morning, while a mob of curious onlookers, wondering what it was all about, pushed up to a coach of the California Stage Company, where four Chinamen and Tee were perched on top, and tried to figure it out. She was returned to her husband.

There were no arrests made at Rabbit Creek, as the Chinese kept their troubles to themselves, and it was not found out until long after.

YOUNG MASON STARTS WORKING

YOUNG MASON occasionally acted as messenger for John Conly and Aleck Crew, bankers at Rabbit Creek, making short trips to Spanish Diggings, Port Wine, St. Louis and Chandlerville, as early as 1859, when he was but twelve years old.

Highwaymen and stage robbers were a serious menace at that time, particularly during the summer months, before the ground was covered by a mantle of snow. To outwit the bandits, Mason never followed roads or trails, but knowing the country thoroughly, traveled on foot through the woods, and over the hills and gulches, where it was supposed no one went—a hectic and not to be coveted job for a kid.

During his perilous work as a bank messenger, Mason was held up but once, in the summer of 1860, when a white man and three Mexicans leaped upon him from the brush at the side of the road. After a thorough search,which revealed only $2 on Mason, he was dismissed in disgust, with a warning against carrying large sums of the bank's money. He was, however, on his return trip, having already delivered the money.

After the incident was reported to the bank, caution was redoubled to safeguard the gold. Thereafter Mason was never seen entering or leaving any of the towns with the treasure, but was met in the woods by trusted agents of the bank, who received or delivered the gold. Most of his trips were made at night, and he frequently diverted attention by playing billiards with the boys until 10 or 11 o'clock before starting on his dangerous trip.

So skillful was Mason in eluding the bandits that he was never held up when carrying the bank's gold, although three times the stage was robbed while he was safely transporting large sums. Numerous times, though, he came within close range of the desperados.

One night when carrying ten thousand in gold to Onion Valley, Mason sighted the light of a campfire through the woods. Approaching cautiously, he saw three Mexicans, one apparently on guard, and the other two cooking over the fire. The stage

MAIN STREET, RABBIT CREEK, CALIFORNIA IN 1860

had that day been looted of $4,500.00 by these bandits, who were later captured and the money recovered. Circling carefully around their camp, Mason continued on his way and delivered the gold safely the following morning.

At another time Mason was carrying $11,000.00 to Gibsonville when he suddenly came upon the freshly murdered victim of highwaymen—throat cut and pack scattered about the ground in their search for money. Mason reported his discovery upon reaching town, but the murderers were never caught.

Such experiences as these made up the daily life of a bank messenger in the sixties. Mason engaged in this work for eleven years (1859-1870) during which time he carried and safely delivered several million dollars, his territory including Port Wine, Eureka, St. Louis, Chandlerville, Pine Grove, Howland Flat, Gibsonville and Onion Valley. During the later years of his service the bank was operated by Dixon Brabbon and Simeon Wheeler.

ALTHOUGH the town of Rabbit Creek had changed its name, in 1857, to La Porte, the majority of the residents and outsiders stuck to the town's original name. As some higher-ups living on Aristocrat Ridge, Rabbit Creek, desired to play for favor into the hands of Mr. Frank Everts, he having become a leading spirit of the town, and its wealthy banker, the members of their clique tried to flatter him by giving the town the name of his home town in Indiana—probably with the idea that he, too, would do a little giving. Nevertheless Rabbit Creek was christened by pioneer prospectors and as long as the world lasts will be known as Rabbit Crek.

It would require a lengthy article to describe the changes in the country since the first piece of Yuba County was, on April 16, 1852, made over into Sierra County, the borders of which changed many times, until Plumas County, in the early sixties, slipped her boundary line over the treasure town of Rabbit Creek. Downieville and Rabbit Creek fought hard for the county seat, but Rabbit Creek lost out, adopted Plumas County as her stepmother, and was gladly welcomed in. So now Rabbit Creek is in Plumas County, California.

The Editor of "The Mountain Messenger," 1862

of Rabbit Creek

The Mountain Messenger was the name of the newspaper of this region. It was first called The Trumpet, established at Gibsonville November 19, 1853, as a semi-monthly, and printed at the office of the Marysville Herald. For a short period it bore the name of Gibsonville Trumpet and St. Louis News, but in May, 1854 the name was changed to Mountain Messenger and it was printed at Gibsonville as a weekly. In September, 1855, the newspaper was transferred to the metropolis of the mountains in this section of California. This was Rabbit Creek. The news game here was great, and the editor played his hand carefully with the populace so that no other local printer poked in.

The editor, Albert T. Dewey, of this illustrious newsmonger always wore a stovepipe hat, smoking or chewing generously. He was never able to button his coat, as the pockets were jammed full of newspapers, letters, bills, books and bottles (ink), thus bulging him to a double-sized man, but at the same time enabling him to transact business anywhere without the use of a writing desk. His legs were so short that only his boots could be seen. The editor was jolly and a smiler.

Paper-day was a big event each week, when several boys were employed to feed, fold and wrap papers. On one of these eventful days John Mason was helping to wrap papers and noticed that the print was very faint, and the editor, upon being notified, was shocked to find there was no printing ink to be had for miles around. After an hour's perplexity over a substitute for ink, preparation of stove polish and axle grease completed the edition very satisfactorily—for looks—but for those who read and handled the paper it meant soiled fingers, as they did not add a dryer to their mixture of stove polish-axle grease ink.

MURDER

Shortly after the world famed Sears and Heenan fight in 1860, two mining partners, Tom Reagan, an Irishman, and Tom Smith, an Englishman, were going from Rabbit Creek to Spanish Flat with four other men and Johnnie Mason, when half way down Warren Hill, opposite Hunter's cabin, Smith shouted "Hurrah for Sears!"

Reagan immediately became mad and said, "I can whip any man who hurrahs for Sears." Johnnie was asked to hold Smith's coat, and as he was about to take it off Reagan plunged a knife three times into Smith. While he was being cared for Reagan slipped up to camp and sold his part of the mining claim to Black Dennis, who did not know of the assault. Then Reagan made his getaway the same night, while Smith was breathing his last. He was later caught in Virginia City, Nevada, and returned.

Johnnie, being a minor, his testimony that it was a cold blooded, unfair, cowardly act of Reagan's did not feaze the judge. The story of Ed Grey, another witness of the murder, favored Reagan, who then was sentenced to but five years.

MORE MURDER

Late one night, Victor Bonner, Proprietor of the El Dorado Saloon and Gambling House, was alone with his wife and brother, when Muchache, a Mexican, entered and started a game of Monte with him. Mrs. Bonner and the brother were cleaning one of the five large hanging lamps, when a rousing argument attracted their attention, and in a moment the Mexican drew from the back of his neck a four-inch dagger and plunged it into Bonner. He darted toward the door, but Bonner shot and got him in the neck. Both died from their wounds a few days later.

The Mexican was identified by the Sheriff of Virgniia City, where he had killed a man and fled to Rabbit Creek. It was often so dangerous to go from camp to camp that crowds were rounded up to make the trip together.

THE BIG FIRE

ON JULY 27th, 1861, the town of Rabbit Creek was almost annihilated by fire, which destroyed nearly all business houses and hotels, at a loss of approximately $160,000, with insurance to cover but $30,000. Schuster's brewery was not burned, as it was a little out of the fire's reach, and it was converted into an emporium for the refugees. There were all sorts of departments quickly established within—restaurant, saloon, meat market, bakery, grocery store, bunks and a bank. A large safe that was not badly damaged by the fire was temporarily hauled there for the banking business.

The origin of the fire is not known. It started at the South end of Main Street and wiped out both sides of this street North for two blocks, creating much excitement in many ways. In one instance, a lady never known to use anything but the best of language and very well respected, let out a volley of profane words that were very shocking, from the veranda of the second story of a building which was being consumed by flames. The volunteer firemen were doing their best to save her. She did not have the nerve to come down the ladder alone, yet every time the firemen grabbed her she fought and swore at them, until the fire was so dangerously near that four firemen tied ropes around her and lowered her to the street.

While the ruins were still smoldering the owners of the property started to rebuild, and by June, 1862, there were three hotels, six large stores and fourteen saloons—two of which had dance halls adjoining. There were also two churches, a big brewery, two large entertainment halls, an opera house and Chinese laundry.

The two Churches were well patronized and their business was very profitable in the early sixties.

RABBIT CREEK'S JUSTLY FAMOUS "HANG OUT"

THREE AUERBACH BROTHERS

AMONGST the enterprising and popular boys at Rabbit Creek and the surrounding country, were the three Auerbach brothers, Fred, Sam and Theodore. Young Mason knew them well, and Fred and Sam kept him busy during his spare hours as a roustabout and freighter for their general merchandise store.

Theodore was a messenger and guard for the express company and bank for several years, and later joined his brothers in business. The boys also had interests in some of the mining properties and in a freighting business, and for a short time owned a pack-mule train, about which many hilarious stories were told.

The Auerbach store was the popular store and a hang-out for the assembling of the mountaineers and miners, who would gather around the large stove in the rear. Here affairs of mining, marriage, murder, death, or dried apples would be discussed. The young were there with the old, often chewing candy while the old chair miners were chewing tobacco, and others chewed news.

In the Auerbach store stood one of the large safes of the camp, and many folks kept their valuables in it. It is hard to say how much gold dust went into and out of that safe, but certainly a huge amount. Sam Auerbach slept in a room in the back part of the store. One night he was awakened with guns in his face and ordered, by two masked men, to open the safe. The safe contained a fortune in gold dust and money. Sam stated that he did not possess the combination and that only his brother Fred knew it, so the thugs proceeded to bust open the safe. Some belated citizens halted outside the store, bellowing loudly in a drunken orgy, and thus the robbers were frightened away before they could crack the safe, and so getting away with only a few hundred dollars out of the till.

Yes, in this store could be found most everything from honey to horseshoes. A great deal of trading was transacted, as well as a cash and credit business. Strawberries or onions

would often be swapped for a hoop skirt or a pair of boots, or a keg of powder or a mule for beans and chewing tobacco.

Lotta Crabtree and her mother would frequently chat and market in this store. Lotta gave several entertainments in Rabbit Creek that were so successful that her mother escorted Lotta through the mining camps to the cities, where she became a successful and famous actress.

The Auerbach brothers left Rabbit Creek when business began to wane, in the early sixties, and went to Austin, Nevada, during the Reese River silver boom.

ZENITH YEAR OF RABBIT CREEK

Eighteen-sixty-two proved to be the zenith year of the growth and prosperity of Rabbit Creek. The hardships of the Civil War had gradually extended to California. Prices soared and business in this region started to decline. A number of merchants who put in a large supply of goods after the fire made big profits. Common calico that they had purchased for twenty-five cents a yard sold readily for a dollar or more. Shoes, hats, clothing, hardware, food—nearly everything doubled and tripled in price. This was very hard on those who could not afford the high prices, and many were compelled to leave for the valley and bay region, only to find the same prevailing conditions.

The newspaper, Mountain Messenger, was removed to Downieville in February, 1864.

FEED HOUSES

La France restaurant and the Railroad restaurant were the main eating places in Rabbit Creek. La France restaurant catered to the better class of people, while the Railroad Restaurant fed the working and poorer class. Each had features of their own. Madame Genevieve Cayot operated La France and had a hobby of charging different prices for the same meals, whereas if one was a "professional," dining there often, they would get the low down charge. Transients or newcomers got the high charge. A tight traveling salesman who had just arrived in town for the first time heard about Madame Cayot's hobby of different charges. The traveling man did not like the idea of being on the higher charge list so that evening when he went in the La France to dine. He went directly up to the Madame and greeted her thus: "Here I am again," and got the low down price when he was finished eating. Madame Cayot specialized in novelties and often one could see carrots, oysters,

apples or fish on the menu. Claret took the place of water here.

The Railroad Restaurant specialized in feeding and filling the champion eaters of the country, and charged reasonable prices. John Mason was dining here one evening and was seated opposite the village blacksmith who liked to eat, and how! Two rabbits, a whole cream pie and a quart and a half of beer were but part of his meal.

The Railroad Restaurant had the best patronage and made the most dough, even though none of the highbrows of Aristocrat Ridge ever were known to eat in this feed house.

California's Pioneer Mountaineer

AN EPISODE IN JOHN MASON'S LIFE

JOHN MASON, while in the employ of Conly and Crew, bankers of Rabbit Creek, at one of their hydraulic mines situated at Secret Diggings, one and a half miles from Rabbit Creek, was sent for by Mr. Conly, on March 30, 1872, to call at the bank for orders. On arriving, Mason was informed that he was to go to Morristown with a letter to Simeon Wheeler, superintendent of the hydraulic mines there. Mason started bright and early on his snowshoes, reaching Morristown, seven miles distant, and delivering the letter to Mr. Wheeler at 10:30 a. m.

Webster H. Walker, one of his friends, who always stopped with him when visiting at Rabbit Creek, came up to the hotel and invited Mason down to spend the night. But Mason told him he would come in the morning for breakfast. In the morning, when they went into the dining-room, Mr. Walker introduced Mason to his fifteen-year-old sister, Laura, and informed him it was her birthday. She was frying pancakes, of which Mason was very fond. It is needless to say the hotcakes were of the finest kind. How he did wish she were nearer to Rabbit Creek so that he could have her fry more of them for him!

On Mason's return to Rabbit Creek that afternoon, Mr. Wheeler informed him that he would have to go back to Morristown the next day. Fortune stepped in right there for him. Mason called on the girl in the evenings after his return. After courting her for four months, he called one evening and told her to ask her mother how he stood with her in regard to marrying Laura. The mother said that if he would wait until her daughter was sixteen, she would give her consent to their marriage. The father was sitting on the front porch reading, and he also asked his consent. The old man looked around at him and said, in a loud voice, "Only on one consideration," and went on reading. After some hesitation, he finally braced up and asked

what that condition was, to which the father replied with a bland smile, "Furnish me with tobacco for a month." Mason immediately sent Laura's younger sister up to his cabin to get the desired weed.

The next day Mason came to Downieville with the written consent of both Mr. and Mrs. Walker and procured the license. On the 3rd of July, 1873, John Mason and Laura Walker were married by the Reverend William Gordon of Downieville, pastor of the M. E. Church at Morristown. The hotcakes did it!

Mason felt so sorry for the other man who had been trying to win Laura's heart that he asked him to be his best man—to which he consented! A few years later, Mason and family moved to Downieville.

THE MASONS AT DOWNIEVILLE

In 1884, Mason was shoved in as constable of Downieville, and shortly thereafter was appointed Deputy Sheriff by Sheriff S. C. Stewart. There was at that time a hard gang around the town and the country was still frequented by robbers and desperados, who afforded Mason plenty to see and do! His first order, given on a Friday, was to have all hogs off the street by the following Monday. He proceeded to visit all folks who had such porkers, and several of them became quite indignant, claiming that their hogs kept the streets clean. Mason, expecting more trouble than he could handle, hired three boys and offered each a reward of $1.00 for every hog found on the street. On Monday not one was sighted, but on Tuesday, early in the morning, came the boys, all out of breath. "There's four hogs on Main Street!" the trio sounded. Mason, leaving his unfinished breakfast, rushed down to the spot, located the owner, Mrs. Kenn, who said her hogs could not have gotten out, as she had them all locked up in a shed. Upon investigation, the lock was found to be broken, a nearby crowbar bespeaking the boys' reward.

Chinatown here was quite lively, as there were several hundred Chinese huddled into a small area, the most prominent

of both dwellings and business places facing the main street and plaza. The Constable had always been friendly with the Celestials and could handle the chop-sticks to perfection. He soon put a stop to the selling of opium to the whites, but it took one demonstration with the butt of his pistol and the hard head of a Chinaman to end it!

Mason escorted a Chinaman, who had cut a woman, to the Sheriff's office. The Chinaman was fined $45.00. But the Chinese tongs took the case in their hands and fined the woman $300.00, making her pay the engraver his $45.00 back.

When Chung Lee's uncle, who was known as the King of this section, died, a grand and elaborate festival took place, after the usual Chinese custom. Out on the plaza, a large covering was stretched on the ground, in the center of which was a greasy roasted hog, several chickens, and other food liked by the Chinese. Punks were doing their stuff, and the mourners in their white dress stooped over in prayer. Everything went along nicely until a Clamper* tipped a half-bent Chinese over on the hog. Soon afterwards the funeral proceeded, and up the road a mile they went, placed a heap of gold coins in the coffin and buried the King ,afterward setting over the grave the roasted hog and all the other eatables. Mason questioned one of the Chinamen as to the cause of the food on top of the grave. The Chinaman said, "So him can eat until he find out where he go, just like white man put flowers on grave for him to smell."

The custom of the Chinese after a burial is to celebrate, and so they did, prancing, dancing, singing and "beating the band" in a manner they thought grand.

Snake was the nickname of the Chinaman who was the official corpse extractor of this period. The Chinese had to be buried, but after a certain period they were dug up and sent back to China. There was an accurate record kept of the Chinese in this country, and every so often a certain number were ordered dug up. Finally Snake had the privilege of digging up

*Clamper: A member of the Highgrade Order of Clampers. A hoodlum de luxe.

the King, and the coin he got out of the coffin was enough to pay his way back to China and keep him the rest of his life in ease there. He left shortly afterwards and was never heard of again.

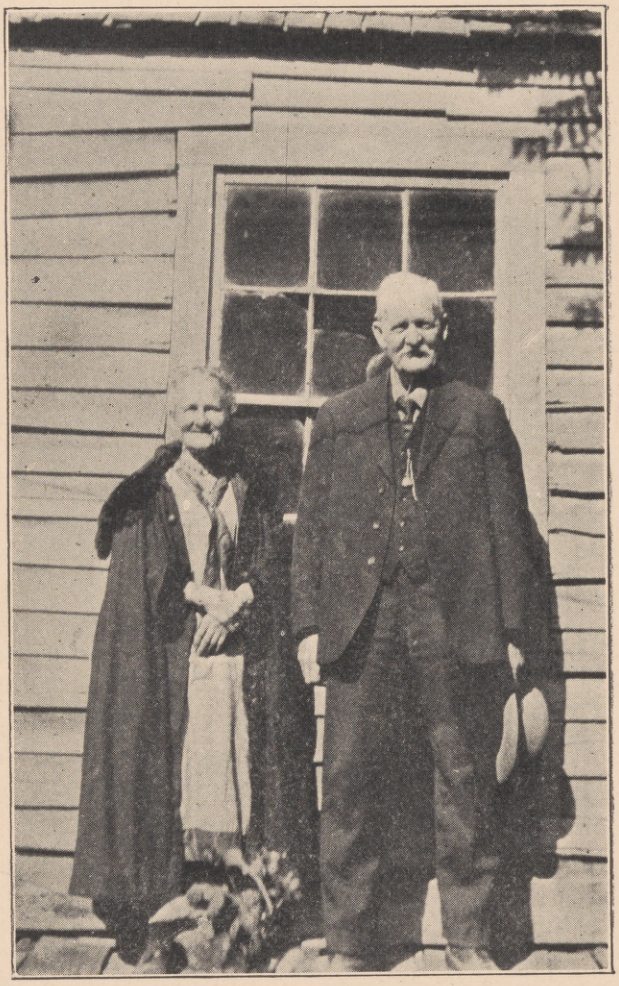
THE CLAMPERS

The Clamper Society was not only in Downieville and Rabbit Creek, but was quite popular throughout the mountain towns and elsewhere. Their meetings were unique. Generally, when a notable was to address the members of this society, he spoke beside a live mule, commonly known in California as a "Jackass."

The purpose of the organization, we understand, was to be for pleasure and mischief, for when a new member was getting blistered outside, the old members were blistering inside with laughter. For immediate assembling on special occasions a huge trumpet was used, fastened to the blacksmith's bellows, which gave the sound power enough to carry all over the country. This would bring everybody who had life left in 'em, and some of the sick folks became well at the sound of this mysterious, mirthful trumpet. It mattered not whether it was twelve or one.

For either be it day or night,
The Clampers looked an awful sight,
Which gave the public much delight,
For the Gatherings never ended in a fight.

This order was responsible for much good, as in the case of the Methodist Church's leaky roof—a new one was given—and poor folks who needed their wood bin or teeth filled were other needs which the Clampers filled.



MR. AND MRS. JOHN THOMAS MASON
Two hearts that still beat as one.

Photo taken at their home in Downieville,
California, 1927

LATER DAYS

By John Thomas Mason

ON the 10th day of October, 1880, we moved from the Rabbit Creek region to Downieville. Speaking of moving, we accomplished the wonderful feat in the following manner: There was a big canyon to cross, and only trails. I got a mule and saddle bags from Downieville, twelve miles away. We then had four children. I put the oldest one (my girl) in the saddle with her feet down in the saddle bags, with two children on one side and one on the other (with a rock to balance the weight) in the saddle bags. Being all ready to start (my wife and I riding afoot) I led the mule, and we arrived safe in Downieville at 4 p. m., as the brake (or cinch) on the mule held firmly. I am sorry I have no pictures of the caravan.

I intended to leave Sierra County in the Spring, but fortune said no, and I am still here. When asked why I stay, I reply that when I came down I could not pay the toll across the bridge below town which was ten cents per head, and after I had stayed a year I owed so much they would not let me go. I was elected Constable in 1884 and appointed Deputy Sheriff by S. C. Stewart, a Republican, serving four years. I served ten years as Deputy Sheriff under A. C. Busch, Democrat, and eight years under James McGregor, Republican. I am now, and have been for twelve years, Justice of the Peace. Any romantic couples who wish to be married, come forth! I purchased the residence in which I now live, from Major William Downey, for whom the town of Downieville was named.

SURPRISES DUE IN MINING

The section of California that this book has taken in was a leading gold producer at the time of California's gold rush.

The Comstock and Reese River mines in Nevada were great producers in the sixties and seventies, with a production of over a **Billion Dollars** up to the present time.

The South African gold mines in the nineties were productive, but on account of most everyone wildly speculating, even bootblacks and chambermaids with their pennies bought sticking stock in these mines. It resulted in a terrible loss to the people, especially in Europe.

The possibility of a wave of wealth to be made in mining now is fine. Now that Hard Times are unanimously recognized, one can expect that about the last resort to get a job is to make one for themselves. Our country has only been scratched for valuable metals. If Uncle Sam would be more reasonable with his tax on the production, and more severe with the swindling stock companies, it would help greatly to bring about better times. It is a fact that Eureka, Sierra County, and many other places in California and Nevada are rich with ore and will soon boom. But do not forget the Weepah gold fever in Nevada that raised whoopee.

A safe way to make money from mining is to mine, and mind it yourself, for history proves as a rule that the merging of mines by merging men is grave for the pee wee stockholders.

LAST MINUTE NEWS

In effort to ascertain more facts about merchants of Rabbit Creek for this book, the following message is this:

Downieville, California
October 29, 1930

Mr. Albert Dressler,
Dear Friend:

Received your telegram one hour ago.

Morris Engle was keeping a merchandise store in Rabbit Creek in the sixties. I went to school with his son Henry, who had the biggest nose of any boy in school. Then there was the Cohens, who kept a clothing store; and I got a suit there, but never again.

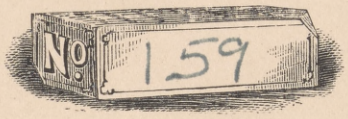
I hope you got my letter about the naming of "Rabbit Town" and "Spanish Diggings."

Both of us are feeling fine. Kind regards from both of us.

John T. Mason.

P. S. Your telegram sounds good to me about the sale of the book. J. T. M.

A limited, numbered edition of Five Hundred and Twenty-five copies, privately published by Albert Dressler, in the month of November, and the year Nineteen Thirty, of which this is



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